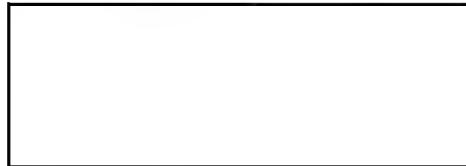


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Syria-Israel: Syria may be moving toward the release of the two Israeli passengers held captive since the hijacking of the TWA airliner late last month.

The Italian diplomat in charge of US interests in Syria has said that, according to Syrian officials, the Israelis are well. He believes that they may be set free if Damascus, which has high hopes for the successful opening of its new airport and for the resumption of visits by "friendly" Americans, can find a face-saving measure to overcome possible objections from some factions of the Syrian regime to the release of the Israelis.

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